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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2297  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

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C O R R E C T E D COPY - ADDED CAPTION  
E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2009  
TAGS: [LE](#) [MO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)  
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON ASSASSINATION OF GIBRAN TUENI

REF: STATE 223709

Classified By: POL/C Timothy Lenderking for Reasons 1.4. (b) and (d)

[11](#). (C) Polcouns discussed reftel demarche with Hassan Hami, MFA Arab Affairs Division Chief, on December 13, and sent additional copies of the statements by the President and Secretary Rice to MFA Acting Director of Arab Affairs

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Abdelghani Bellaaziri, who was unavailable. Hami noted that he had seen the statements by the President and Secretary Rice, but offered no comment on how the GOM would react. Polcouns stressed that this was an act of terror, and the US encouraged the GOM and other countries of the region to condemn it.

[12](#). (SBU) As of December 15, the GOM has made no official comment on the assassination or the Mehlis report. Several French and Arabic-language dailies carried the Tueni assassination on the front pages on December 13, including semi-official daily Le Matin, which described the Tueni killed as "barbaric." Subsequent media reporting on the killing is generally factual, drawing primarily from news agencies AFP and Reuters.

[13](#). (SBU) Editorialists are cautiously noting that "Syria may be implicated" in the Tueni assassination, but most commentators have so far generally refrained from pushing that link strongly. The only opinion piece printed so far appears in a December 15 editorial in left-leaning Bayane Al Youm, affiliated with the Party of Progressive Socialism. The editorial is an open letter to Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, which castigates him for his alleged hypocrisy for rushing to blame Syria "when Syria is being targeted by the US, France, and Israel," and when "you were just recently one of Syria's closest allies."

Bush